

REMARKS OF U. S. REPRESENTATIVE JOHN E. FOGARTY AT MEETING  
OF THE RHODE ISLAND ASSOCIATION OF SPECIAL EDUCATION  
TEACHERS, NOVEMBER 2, 1966

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ESPECIALLY THE FEW

I am especially pleased to be with you today and honored to be the Association's first guest speaker. On the basis of my support of special education in Congress I believe we can already consider one another natural allies. I am sure that the youthful vitality of your organization will lead to early achievement. Much of what you can accomplish rests on Federal aid to education for the handicapped. So, if I may, I would like to discuss some recent developments on the subject.

But before I do, let us look at the causes for concern which you and I know will demand even greater Federal, State and local efforts on behalf of special education in the months and years ahead.

Progress in the education of handicapped children has on the whole been slow. Thousands of children do not

have access to the facilities and skilled instruction they so desperately need. This is so even in the midst of the Administration's program for a Great Society. And even after President Kennedy's dedicated leadership in education. And in spite of the work of Congress over the past decade in behalf of special education.

The figures describing the problem we are trying to remedy are all too expressive. At least five million school age children in the United States have serious mental, physical, or emotional handicaps which require special attention. And yet, according to the Office of Education, only two million of these children are enrolled in the type of program in which the special educator serves. This is just 40 percent of the number who should have access to special education instruction. Obviously about 60 percent of the handicapped children receive no special education instruction at all. I accept this as evidence

that our society has come frighteningly close to ignoring the 10 percent of its total school age population who need our most expert attention. Not simply these few, but especially these few. These few who for the most part were born with their handicap. These few who cannot wait for tomorrow.

Until recently much of the Federal legislation benefitting the handicapped was signed into law over Congressional resistance, since education in general was considered a state and local function. But in 1957 with my support \$1 million was appropriated to the Cooperative Research Program of the U. S. Office of Education. One of the major reasons for authorizing this program was to provide Federal support for research in special education. While the need for research will exist for as long as we can see into the future, the time came for a bold new

approach to the teaching of the handicapped, especially of the mentally retarded. I supported such an approach with the passage of the Mental Retardation Facilities and Community Mental Health Centers Act of 1963, believing that this was a landmark in special education. It goes far toward solving the shortage of special education teachers by authorizing a program of training in almost all specialties. \$24.5 million earmarked for teacher training has been appropriated and about one third that amount for further research.

The next great stride made by the Federal government to support special education research was in 1965 with the passage of Public Law 89-105, which extended research authority of the Office of Education through 1969. Beginning with \$6 million in 1966, research grants will amount to more than double that figure in 1969.

A brief survey of Federally supported special education research indicates that the greatest portion of money has gone toward the study of mental retardation with significant contributions to our knowledge of minimal brain dysfunction.

Little by little we are gaining insight into the overall picture of emotionally disturbed children, while at the same time work continues on the methods of approaching the education of the crippled and health impaired.

These have been the three major areas of research. Yet there is progress with speech and hearing problems and also multiple handicaps.

Summing up on accomplishment in research, I look forward to the day when the U. S. Office of Education has successfully completed the establishment of its network of centers which will accumulate, evaluate, and disseminate

instructional materials related to special education. When this program is completed, there will be between ten and fifteen such regional centers. I know that you await the operation of these research and demonstration centers no less impatiently than I. For the fundamental aim of such broad Federal assistance is to put knowledge and skills into the hands of the educator.

However vital the passage of the Mental Retardation Facilities and Community Mental Health Centers Act of 1963, no other education program was as massive as the historic Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965. In the 89th Congress we took an enormous step forward to provide unprecedented opportunities for improving educational opportunities for all including the handicapped, particularly under the billion dollar program of aid to deprived children. Though handicapped children were included in this program,

their participation was not as widespread as expected. To correct this I introduced a new title to this basic legislation of 1965 which specifically set aside funds for the handicapped. The response has been swift and nearly complete.

The long road toward effective Federal consideration of the needs of the handicapped has led us to the very end of the 89th Congress. I am proud to say that highly significant amendments to the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, which I supported, now await the signature of the President. The most significant of these amendments is the new title which will assist the States in the initiation, expansion and improvement of programs and projects for the education of handicapped children at the pre-school, elementary and secondary school level. \$50 million is authorized to be appropriated for Fiscal Year 1967 and \$150 million is authorized for Fiscal Year 1968.

Two other significant provisions call for the United States Commissioner of Education to establish the National Advisory Committee on Handicapped Children. At least half of the members of this committee will be professional special educators. The Advisory Committee will review the many features of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act which deal with the education of the handicapped. And it will make recommendations for the improvement of the administration of this Act and all programs administered by the Office of Education pertaining to the handicapped.

Finally we will see the establishment of a Bureau for Education and Training of the Handicapped. It will come into existence by July 1, 1967, as the United States Office of Education celebrates its Centennial, and let me be among the first to congratulate the Office of Education for its first one hundred years of stewardship of Federal education legislation.



Looking back on the record I am particularly proud and gratified that I played some part in these accomplishments by having successfully sponsored legislation to provide for training teachers for the mentally retarded and for the deaf and to provide for Captioned Films for the Deaf in the 85th and 86th Congresses, which are considered to be the foundation upon which all legislation for the handicapped has been built. I believe that those of us who have the highest hopes for increasing the opportunities for handicapped children must realize we are beginning to win the battle. But legislation provides only a blueprint. No body of law, no massive financial assistance will substitute for determined and skillful implementation. If properly implemented, special education programs can effectively bring dramatic changes into the lives of handicapped youth. We in Rhode Island,

and indeed across the country, must put our tools to work wisely and without delay.

I urge you as members of the Rhode Island Association of Special Education Teachers to place your efforts individually and organizationally where they will count the most. Do it with dedication. And do it now.

I have great confidence that the name of your organization will become a valuable addition to the roster of those groups which move special education forward in Rhode Island.